

To: Smith, Paula[Smith.Paula@epa.gov]
From: Card, Joan
Sent: Mon 9/14/2015 10:05:02 PM
Subject: FW: R8 Q&As

David added an additional sentence to answer 2 in blue.

From: Ostrander, David
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2015 3:09 PM
To: Hestmark, Martin; Card, Joan; Ackerman, Joyce; McGrath, Shaun
Cc: Way, Steven
Subject: RE: R8 Q&As

Revised to include flow capacity

Nonresponsive

Q: September 9, 2015 Article in Colorado Watchdog.org entitled “Colorado mine owner: EPA lied in congressional hearing”, Todd Hennis, Gold King’s owner is quoted as saying:

“It shows there was no flow of water coming out,” Hennis said. “They are calling it an act of God when it was an act of government. The photos clearly show the EPA backfilled the portal to block water from coming out and they blocked the discharge pipes at the same time.” “It’s absolute baloney of the worst sort,” Hennis said immediately after the hearing. “They blocked off the flow of water out of the drain pipes and they created the huge wall of water in the Gold King by their actions last year.”

A: On September 11, 2014, work began to remove the material that was blocking the Gold King adit. The work stopped when it was determined that the elevation of the adit floor was estimated to be six (6) feet below the waste-dump surface elevation. The presence of water below two (2) 24-inch pipes indicated the current flow of water was coming out at least four (4) feet below the roof of the adit, indicating approximately six (6) feet of impounded water above the estimated adit floor elevation. On September 12, 2014, two (2) drain pipes were placed at the base of the blockage to capture the on- going mine water drainage and direct flow into the existing flume channel installed in 2008 by DRMS. The adit area was backfilled and compacted with additional loads of crushed rock to maintain a stable surface at the adit for potential future work. The addition of crushed rock was well back from the adit blockage and did not cause any impoundment of water and the two drain pipes were flowing all of the discharge into the flume channel at the end of the work. These two pipes have a capacity of 700 to 8000 gpm depending on the flow velocity and head, more than adequate to drain the existing discharge and not create any backup in the mine adit. The drain pipes were still flowing when workers returned to the site in 2015.